

Record

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Hispanics gather for first-ever conference

By Frank Lay
Correspondent

Approximately 175 Hispanic Baptists from Corinth to the Coast gathered May 23-24 at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko for the first-ever Hispanic Evangelism Conference in Mississippi.

The theme for the conference was "Parado En La Brecha" (Standing in the Gap).

Participants in the conference included Hispanic leaders from the North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Atlanta, a church planting pastor from San Antonio, Texas, and leaders from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

Rolando Lopez, pastor of La Iglesia

Bautista Noroeste (Northeast Baptist Church) in San Antonio, Texas, was the keynote speaker for the conference. Lopez, who has served Northeast Church for eight years, guided his church in the planting of 13 additional churches and six missions during that period.

He spoke on the importance of discipleship for the new believers who comprise new churches. He emphasized that each new church is expected to begin planting another new church within a year of existence. In his messages, Lopez sought to motivate Hispanic Baptists in Mississippi to begin planting new churches across this state. In addition to serving as pastor, Lopez has also served as president of the Convencion Bautista General Hispana de Texas.

Josue Del Risco, originally from Cuba, currently serves as a missionary in the NAMB Department of Interfaith Witness. Risco led conferences on witnessing to Jehovah's



HIGH PRAISE — Participants in the first-ever Mississippi Baptist Hispanic Evangelism Conference May 23-24 at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko lift up the name of the Lord during a worship service praise time. Mississippi Baptist Convention Board planners intend to make the conference an annual event, with assistance from the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering. (BR photo by Frank Lay)

Witnesses and to Catholics. Prior to beginning his ministry with NAMB, Risco served as a pastor of Hispanic churches in Louisiana and Oklahoma.

Sonny Adkins, MBCB Director of Evangelism, and David Alexander, consultant in the MBCB Church Planting Department, led a conference on witnessing tools. The Barrios family from New Mexico provided the music for the conference.

The first Hispanic Evangelism Conference was

jointly planned by the Hispanic Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi and the MBCB Church Planting and the Evangelism Departments.

Hispanic Baptist churches in Mississippi actively participate in their local associations, the Mississippi Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Last year, the Hispanic Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi (Compaterismo Hispano Bautista de Mississippi) was organized at Iglesia Bautista

Buen Pastor in Forest for the purpose of strengthening and encouraging Hispanic churches across the state.

New Hispanic church plants in Mississippi are supported by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering. For more information, contact David Alexander, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3364, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 364. E-mail: dalexander@mbcb.org.



PRAYER AND PREPARATION — Volunteer counselors at the Hispanic Evangelism Conference May 23-24 at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko gather for prayer time and to prepare for participants who are led to make a spiritual decision during the conference. Gustavo Salazar (third from left), pastor of Nuevo Pacto Church in Laurel, sports a T-shirt that reads in Spanish, "Christ Loves You." (BR photo by Frank Lay)

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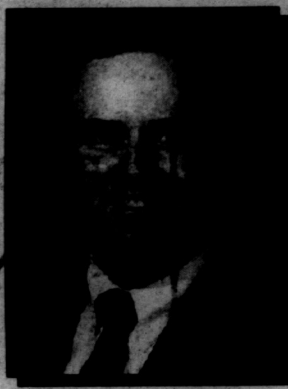
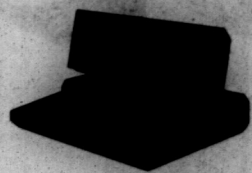
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Mississippi Baptists owe the citizens of this state an apology, so let's be big about it and get it over with right here: To everyone who recently scoured their local supermarkets to no avail for a single package of rice, beans, or tea, we are sorry. We're responsible. We bought it all and sent it to Iraq.

Yes, fellow citizens of this great state, in our haste to follow our Master (Matt. 25:35) and seize an evangelistic opportunity (Matt. 28:18-20), Mississippi Baptists completely cleaned out the dry foodstocks that were needed to fill the 70-pound boxes to overflowing. In addition to the rice, beans, and tea that went into the effort, we also swept up all the flour, sugar, and powdered milk we could find.

According to figures compiled by the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, there were 3,316 food-laden boxes collected on May 20-21 at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds in Jackson and Camp Garaywa in Clinton. When the collection was over, Mississippi Baptists had dropped off more than 116 tons of food worth nearly \$200,000 — and donated almost \$11,000 in cash. Every Mississippi Baptist association was represented, which in turn represented 572 churches and 3,511 local volunteers.

An International Mission Board (IMB) spokesman said the final Southern Baptist Convention-wide tally could go as high as perhaps 95,000 boxes. Each box is estimated to feed a family of five people for a month.

We can offer no excuses to the people of Mississippi. This thing just snowballed out of control. Nelda Brown, a member of First Church in Columbus, said she started out with a single box from her family — but she didn't stay that way for long.

"I asked around for some more boxes and before I knew it I ended up with 33 (boxes).

I recently returned to my alma mater, Blue Mountain College (BMC) in Blue Mountain, to speak to the ministerial alliance. BMC is one of our three Mississippi Baptist institutions of higher learning, the others being Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton and William Carey College (WCC) in Hattiesburg.

I was greeted by BMC President Bettye Coward and given a tour of the campus. I was impressed with the improvements made during her tenure.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention has given me many opportunities to be involved with our educational institutions. I have served on the board of trustees for both WCC and BMC, as well as on the Education Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention that relates to the three institutions. I worked closely with the college presidents when I was president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. These opportunities have given me a perspective on the importance of our Christian institutions.

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GUEST OPINION:



Support our Baptist colleges

By Rex Yancey, pastor
First Church, Pascagoula

All of our Baptist colleges face unique challenges, and one of them is not any more important than the others. All three of our institutions are offering a quality education on limited budgets. Christian high schoolers who do not want to put their Christian growth on hold through their college years should consider a Christian education.

BMC touches the lives of students in significant ways. I began my freshman year there when I was 17 years of age. My pastor, Jim Futral, encouraged me to work toward a college degree. Professors James Travis and Frances Tyler whetted my

appetite to know more about the Bible. Professors in other disciplines worked with me. There is no doubt that I received the individual attention I needed at BMC. The administration and faculty were there for the students and wanted them to succeed. I owe much of my success in life to the people who make BMC special.

First, I want to encourage laypeople in Mississippi and beyond to financially assist our colleges. There are many Christians who have discretionary funds that can assist a great work. Contact the schools or Hal Fisher, director of the

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We apologize



Mississippi State Fairgrounds, Jackson — May 20, 2003

A local moving company — Bond Relocation Systems — donated some of the packing boxes and... actually ended up donating a truck to take the boxes to Jackson. Other churches found out about the truck and donated food boxes, too," Brown said.

Erroneous reports in the national news media accused us of trying to manipulate a starving Iraqi populace into converting to Christianity by bribing them with food, but that wasn't the case at all. As a matter of fact, the boxes merely exhibited a small, simple label on the outside that contained one verse of Scripture (John 1:17) in the Arabic language.

"The doors to Iraq are opening slowly but they are opening," said an unidentified IMB worker who recently addressed that

agency's board of trustees. "The opportunities may be opening single file, but God has blessed us. We are beginning with compassion. Unlike what some are saying. We are giving with no strings attached."

As you can easily see, fellow Mississippians, your Baptist neighbors had no choice but to do what we did. We could do no less and still call ourselves Christians. After what Jesus did for us, we felt it was the least we could do for Him.

So please accept our profound apology, along with a word of advice: The next time Mississippi Baptists are called upon to feed a starving country, you might want to make a quick run to the supermarket before we get started.

You already know what's going to happen.

Mississippi Baptist Foundation, for giving options. The old slogan is true: *Do your giving while you're living so you're knowing where it's going.*

There is no better investment than an investment that will make a difference in the lives of young people. Consequently, these young people in whom you invest will invest their lives in a worthy Christian career.

Secondly, there are construction projects going on right now. It would be great if churches would send construction teams. Contact the schools about these mission possibilities.

Finally, encourage your children to choose one of our Mississippi Baptist institutions.

I am for all three of them. Our institutions touch lives. We certainly want to do what it takes to continue this fine tradition. I encourage you to pray with me that our institutions will find the students, resources, and denominational cooperation enhance their work and position themselves to thrive in the years ahead.

Journey leads chaplain to Abraham, Moses

SOUTHERN IRAQ (BP) — In 120-degree heat with wind tossing fine Iraqi sand around like "baby powder," John Denton, a Southern Baptist chaplain, said his journey has caused him to reflect on Abraham and Moses and their "journey in the desert — walking by faith with God."

"I ponder and reflect on what men of faith these were — to trust in God with their lives and with the outcome of their existence," Denton wrote in an e-mail published in May by the Florida Baptist Witness.

Ministering to coalition forces, to enemy prisoners of war and to displaced Iraqi civilians is all part of a day's work for Denton, who as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Chaplains Corps, serves as the command chaplain of Fleet Hospital Three in southern Iraq.

"The opportunities for ministry have been rich and rewarding," the North American Mission Board-endorsed chaplain wrote. "I've walked with people after their surgery, played guitar for injured children, held the hand of a Marine as I prayed for him before his surgery, and stood close to the enemy as I looked into his eyes and offered a smile."

It is a "joy" to minister to all the people regardless of their native land or faith, Denton, a member of Myrtle Grove Church in Pensacola, wrote. "Each of these people have basic spiritual needs," he noted. "It is my aim to daily share the love, kindness, mercy and grace of Jesus Christ with those around me."

In sharing his faith, Denton described "fox-hole religion" as one of the challenges chaplains face in a combat zone. Relating an incident that occurred while he and other military personnel were sitting in a bunker under



COMFORTING A CASUALTY — U.S. Navy chaplain John Denton (standing) visits with U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Marco Chavez in the casualty receiving area of Fleet Hospital Three in southern Iraq. Chavez suffered upper and lower back strains as a result of a motor vehicle accident. (BP photo courtesy of the Florida Baptist Witness)

enemy attack, Denton told of someone who said, "We'll be OK in this bunker ... the chaplain is in here with us."

Denton replied, "Thanks, but I'm not a good-luck charm. You need the same thing that I need in this bunker — a life-changing, life-sustaining relationship with the God who cares for us and is able to see us through this war and the rest of eternity."

Sustaining and fostering an interest in spiritual matters after the enemy threat has ended is the real challenge, Denton related. To his surprise, some Christians in his unit regularly volunteer to meet the challenge by conducting "vibrant" Bible studies, outreach programs and worship services.

"The Lord has raised up an army of saints to faithfully labor in this particular vineyard," Denton wrote.

The Navy Chaplain Corps motto, Denton said, sums up his service overseas: "Provide for your own; facilitate for others;

care for all." He added, it is a "privilege to serve as a Southern Baptist chaplain in the Navy."

With 14 years of Navy service, Denton has been stationed in Mississippi, California, Washington, D.C., and Japan and he served in Operation Desert Storm. He and his wife Beth were married while they were upperclassmen at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach more than 15 years ago. After they both graduated, they went to New Orleans Seminary where Denton earned a master of divinity degree.

Richard Hamel, minister of music at Myrtle Grove Church, said the Dentons are an "incredible" couple. Both dedicated church workers, Beth directs the children's choir while John plays the piano and preaches when he is home.

"John has a heart for ministry," Hamel said. "His life walks the example of Jesus as much as any man I know."

Denton said it is difficult being away from his wife and their two children, whom he described as the "real heroes."

However, the couple lives like thousands of Christian military families during Operation Iraqi Freedom — one spouse remains home while the other is deployed. Both trust God to provide for the other.

As with any military wife,

Beth faces the same problems other military wives have when the husband leaves — things break. Soon after John left, Beth said their car's water pump died, the kitchen linoleum started to bubble up, and a toilet broke.

Even with all the mini-disasters, Beth serves as one of two ombudsmen or points of contact for about 300 Fleet Hospital families who have concerns. When the fleet deployed the week of March 13, she said she received about 50 calls a day for a week.

Although Beth said she was at peace about God's care for her and the children, she had trouble learning to trust God "to be my Husband" and to trust Him while John was in harm's way. Her anxiety for his safety was heightened watching the daily news reports from Iraq, she recounted.

"I found myself praying, but feeling a duty of worry," Beth

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said. "I realized that I was praying, yet grabbing the situation back from the Lord and choosing to carry the burden."

After receiving John's first letter, Beth said she crossed a "spiritual hurdle."

"I realized I had been trusting Jesus to be there for me, but I needed to also trust Him with my husband," Beth said.

While John might be away for up to 12 months, he did not have anyone to pamper his "pride and joy" — a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. When they asked Bob Govoni, a friend from church, to consider caring for the bike, he looked "amazed" and gratefully accepted, Beth said.

Govoni told them that God had led him to sell his bike just two days before, and he "grieved" the loss, but wanted to be obedient to God, Beth recounted.

"God had planned all along that Bob would care for John's Harley while he was overseas," Beth said. "Like Abraham being asked to sacrifice Isaac, the Lord was just checking priorities."

Looking back

10 years ago

A meeting is scheduled in Houston, Texas, prior to the Southern Baptist Convention by Lloyd Elder, former Baptist Sunday School Board president, with state Baptist leaders. Elder has circulated a proposal entitled, "Calling the Family Back Together" that lists reforms for the Southern Baptist Convention.

20 years ago

Frank Pollard, president of Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Cal., says that one of the biggest problems for Southern Baptists is not inerrancy but integrity. "Calling a Southern Baptist seminary professor a liberal is like calling a U.S. Senator a communist," Pollard said.

50 years ago

Religious News Service reports that a new film on Christ, *I Beheld His Glory*, will not be shown on either NBC or CBS because the film "might offend Jewish viewers." However, the ABC and Dumont networks have both picked up the film for broadcast.



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FRONT PAGE

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Pioneer pastor honored at 50th anniversary

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

One thing can be said about Bob Lowe — he personifies the pioneer spirit.

On September 1, 1952, Lowe packed his bags, left \$16 with his wife and daughters in Mississippi "to hold them over until I could send them

days, and stopped in Ogden. "I never got away from the place," he said.

Some time later he read an article in The Baptist Record by Gracie Marx, the first Southern Baptist area missionary for Idaho and Utah. Lowe had been pastoring for a year at a small church in Winona but kept thinking about Ogden.

"I couldn't get over those mountains," he said.

So Lowe headed west. He spent the night with a friend in Oklahoma and drove on through New Mexico. When he stopped in New Mexico for the night, he realized he had left his quilt and pillow in Oklahoma — he had planned on sleeping in his car.

Lowe parked his car in front of what was called a "Prayer Mission," and was given a room for the evening.

Lowe's next stop was Clearfield, Utah, near his destination of Ogden. He spent the next seven weeks with John L. Smith, an area pastor.

Smith told Lowe that at the time there were only seven Southern Baptist churches in the entire state of Utah.

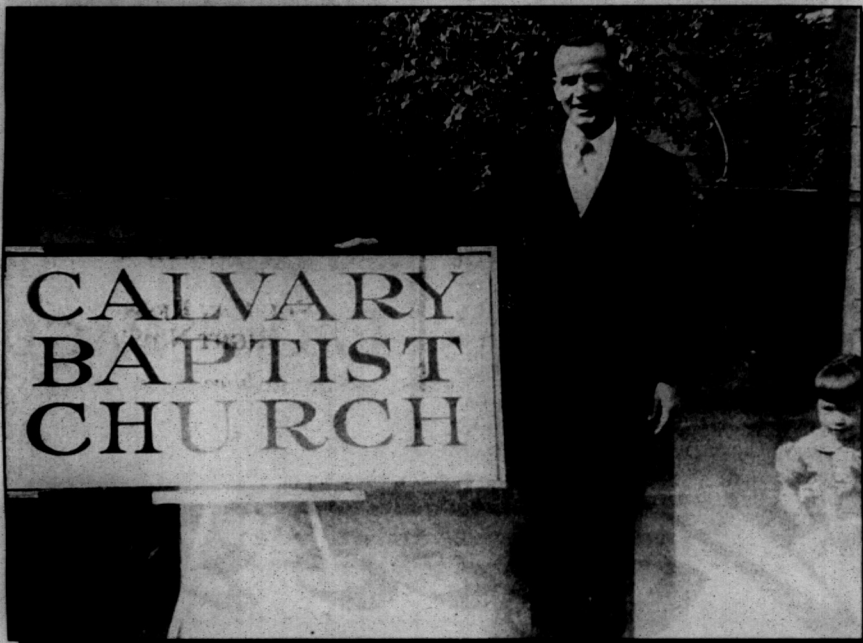
Lowe knew that if was going to stay in Ogden, he would have to find somewhere else to live at the end of those first seven weeks, and he hadn't yet had a payday.

Lowe soon secured a job at a local U.S. Air Force base. During his initial work, he participated in a church census. At one house, Lowe said, "I met a man sitting, listening to a ball game on the radio, drinking a beer, and crying."

Lowe witnessed to the man, who also worked at the Air Force base. He told Lowe



SPECIAL HOMECOMING — Bob Lowe (center) is honored during the 50th anniversary of Calvary Church in Ogden, Utah, in February 2003 with Willie Martin (left) current pastor of Calvary Church and Martin's wife Louise. (BR special photo)



THE PIONEER — Bob Lowe, then pastor of Calvary Church in Ogden, Utah, is captured with his daughter Rose in this period photo. Lowe founded the church, the only Southern Baptist church in Ogden, in 1954. (BR special photo)

part of my paycheck," and, with \$40 in his own pocket, headed west for Ogden, Utah, "to preach to the Mormons."

Mormons is one of the names by which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, headquartered in Salt Lake City, is known.

As a result of his work, Ogden had its first Southern Baptist church and in February 2003, Lowe was invited back to Calvary Church for its Jubilee Celebration.

According to Lowe, he had been to San Francisco to visit a friend from his World War II

that he was going home to Oklahoma for a couple of weeks to put a headstone on his wife's grave.

"He asked me if I could stay in his house while he was gone. There was food, a place to stay, and it saw me through," said Lowe.

Soon afterward, Lowe moved his family to Ogden and into a two-room house.

On February 1, 1953, Lowe started a church that initially met in a school auditorium. The congregation consisted of his family and one other woman. The next week, he said, "We had three visitors, but the next week we were back to the original group."

The church met in the front room of Lowe's house for a while, and then they were able to secure a storefront.

"We got up to a high of 123 one Sunday," Lowe said. Eventually they were able to construct a building. During Lowe's ministry, other churches were birthed from the original work.

Once while Lowe was in Tennessee at a missions conference, wind destroyed their Ogden church building. "We lost a \$4000 roof, but the insurance paid \$17,000," Lowe said, "so we were able to rebuild better than before."

Lowe pastored the church from 1954 until 1962, and he and his family were present on February 2 of this year for the church's 50th anniversary.

"I always liked pioneer stories," said Lowe, "and I just rejoice in the pioneer opportunity the Lord gave me in Ogden."

Kenya missionary dies after surgery, bout with pneumonia

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP) — Southern Baptist missionary Evelyn Woolridge, age 41, died in Nairobi, Kenya, on May 26 of pneumonia following gall bladder surgery.

Woolridge and her husband Michael had served since January 1999 in a unique arrangement that had them serving as international consultants for LifeWay Christian Resources through the International Mission Board (IMB). The couple and their five children had been scheduled to return May 30 to Nashville, where he was to continue his work with LifeWay.

Evelyn Woolridge had a lifelong passion for the people of Africa, said LifeWay President James L. Draper Jr. "We at LifeWay are deeply grieved by Evelyn's passing but are confident in the Lord's provision," Draper said. "We continue to lift Michael and his family up in our prayers."

"Although Michael and Evelyn represent LifeWay through the International Mission Board, we and Evelyn took seriously Jesus' Great Commission. They have had a great love for the people of Africa."

The Woolridges were missionaries in East Africa in a unique arrangement through LifeWay. "They were so effective and so dedicated to the people and the mission that they created a great legacy," Draper said. "We are grateful for their dedication and the contribution they made to the mission of Christ."

Woolridge was born Feb. 5, 1962, in Nashville, Tenn., and emigrated to the United States with her mother and mother. She was a member of the First Baptist Church in Nashville, Md., where she was a member of missions.

ly, her missionary colleagues, and national coworkers and share their grief in this tragic loss.

While her husband worked in his consultant's role for LifeWay, Evelyn Woolridge had served in Kenya in a variety of ways, including secretarial assistance and organizing women's events and other meetings. She also served as secretary for the Parent-Teacher Partnership at Nairobi's Kisumu Academy, where her children had attended from their infancy.

On April 25, Michael had surgery and was hospitalized. Evelyn was with him during his recovery. She was admitted to Nairobi's Aga Khan Hospital on May 1. Her condition worsened, and she was transferred to the hospital's intensive care unit on May 2.

Woolridge was born Feb. 5, 1962, in Nashville, Tenn., and emigrated to the United States with her mother and mother. She was a member of the First Baptist Church in Nashville, Md., where she was a member of missions.

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Leo, six brothers, and one sister. A memorial service was held May 30 at Highlands Church in Nairobi. Arrangements for the service in the United States were made by the International Mission Board.



FINDING DIRECTION

Oftentimes, it is extremely difficult to find your direction. Sometimes you have opportunity to do good or to do something else good, and it's not a conflict of morals, or ethics, or rights and wrongs, but it is still not easy to find your direction.

Recently, I got caught in the rain. I was out walking and suddenly it started raining, so with no place to find shelter, I just kept on walking. It was not a downpour, just a steady, good rain that began to run off the pavement. For some reason this caught my attention — from where I was, the water was flowing down on the side of the road in one direction, but just a few feet away, the water was flowing in the opposite direction. I was at the crest of a little hill and so the water was moving both north and south.

I stopped in the rain shower and just watched as droplets of water were hitting and having to decide which way they would go. Now, I don't suppose that raindrops actually go through any kind of mental exercise or process information as to whether they will move one way or the other; but I wondered if, occasionally, they might face that kind of decision. From where I was standing, the decision that they would make would take them in totally opposite directions and would certainly make a difference in where they went and what they encountered as little raindrops.

Now, even though raindrops may not be able to reason or may not be able to think through or pray through a decision, it occurred to me that you and I not only have that opportunity, but we live with the responsibility of seeking, finding, and making good decisions — decisions like the raindrops, that may carry us in different directions.

The Prophet Joel expressed it this way in his little book, as he said, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!" (Joel 3:14) He was right about his day, but he certainly could make this same statement about our day. Each of us can find herself or himself at that crest of a moment in life, having to decide to go in one direction or another. Sometimes, we are influenced by the elements around us, like other raindrops that may be flowing one direction or another; or, the winds of opinion might blow us one way or the other. And, each day that accumulation of choices, those decisions that we must make and do make, certainly shape our future.

As I thought about finding directions, I began to think about "Grads." It is that time of year where thousands of young people across our nation are coming to that crowning of moments in the educational process — graduation! Some will graduate



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

from high school, some from college or universities, and some maybe will have a terminal degree — but the question will be, "Where do we go from here?" The choices are many, varied, and certainly life-altering.

In the framework of that time around graduation, potentially the most significant directions in life will be chosen. Some will be choosing another school to attend. Others may be contemplating marriage, and others will be seeking a place in the workforce where they can start earning a living and making a contribution in life. Some will stand at this moment of time and have all of the choices ahead of them, knowing that to select one will mean to reject another and what consequences might that bring?

Then, as I thought about the little raindrops seeking their direction, I also thought about "Dads." We are only days away from Father's Day — you know, the day that was created some years after Mother's Day, probably because men felt like they were being neglected and possibly a few folks felt guilty about leaving them out. So — let's have a Father's Day in June and at least acknowledge dad's presence and say some encouraging words to him. So I say to the dads out there, "I commend you, thank God for you, and pray that the Lord Himself will give you strength, courage, and wisdom as you make decisions that affect you, your companion, and the precious children that God has brought into your sphere of influence!"

The role of dad is a weighty responsibility. While mom plays such an important role in not only birthing, but nurturing, encouraging, loving, and disciplining the child, dad also plays a vital role. God knew what He was doing when He placed two people together to raise a child. It takes both of you! And, to the degree that dads, or moms, fail in making the right decisions in following the Lord, we help or hinder our children.

As I continued to watch the raindrops moving into one direction and another, I thought of grads, and dads, and also "Fads." Fads are interesting things to watch as they come and go. They are not necessarily bad (though they can be) and they are not necessarily good (though they can be). Usually, they are just different, and oftentimes, enjoyable. I recall back in the

'60's when a manufacturer made a tube into a circle and started selling them as hoola-hoops. If you were alive at that time, then you know; and, if you weren't living then, there is no way to describe for you the national mania that we experienced. In the hoola-hoop craze, everyone had to have one and most folks had several and some of us never did learn to make the thing work!

For some years they had disappeared, but over the past few years they have had a renewal and now you can buy them everywhere. It is a reoccurring fad that, for the most part, is fun. Then, I began thinking about those changes that take place in church life that kind of ebb and flow, and come and go. I remember back in the '70's when churches all across America had to buy a bus; not only one bus, but more like a fleet of buses so they could begin a bus ministry. I went to seminars to learn how to set up a bus ministry. I even attended a conference where a man told of all the benefits, blessings, and souls that would be saved because of a bus ministry. He then invited everyone who did not have this ministry to come to the front, kneel and pray, and commit to God that they would start one. It was the ultimate tool for reaching a world for Jesus.

There are still some bus ministries, but I know of none to rival anything like we developed and participated in during those years. The mission was and is solid and unchanged — to reach people for Christ; but, the mechanism of just buying buses, painting them, and sending them out on the road, to some degree was a "fad" of the time.

I recall the Christian Coffee House fad. Back in the '60's, during the Jesus Movement days, churches all over would find a house where kids could hang out, have Bible studies, drink Cokes, enjoy some Christian music, and be encouraged in their walk with Christ. This "fad" lasted for several years and then they disappeared. I've watched as churches set out to build family life buildings, or recreation centers, and it seemed as though every church had to have one. Some churches have utilized these into wonderful ministries where families are involved, people are reached, and kids are encouraged; but, others are large, unused, shells that just sit on the

church property.

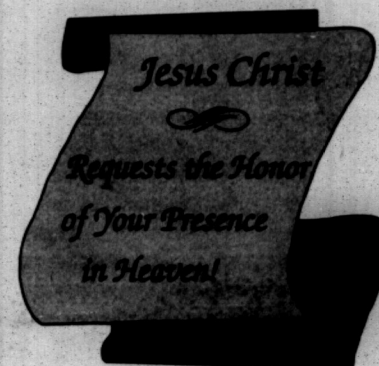
These are not bad things, but they ought to help us keep our balance, our emotional equilibrium in order to understand that things do change! Generally, we are better for the experience, even though the experience may have faded away. I mention that to say a word about music trends in our churches. Music has a significantly personal appeal. In my life time, I have watched as groups have been enthralled with one particular expression of music and then moved to another and then on to another. Trends change and what is so significant at one moment in your life may tend to change and even fade as time goes on.

While I am talking about "fads," I would really prefer to identify these changes as "trends" and all of us have been affected or irritated by them through the years. I can remember, years ago, some people getting upset because a quartet was going to be singing at a church. They were so outraged that a quartet had been invited into their church. I also remember some people refusing to go to a service because a special musical presentation was going to be made that was, in their estimation, "high-brow" and painfully formal.

There is no question that some of the new music that is being done today in our churches today is appealing and attractive to many folks. There is a freedom and openness that comes to many people by looking on a screen and singing from a PowerPoint presentation rather than a hymnal. On the other hand, I have known of folks who have refused to sing because neither the words nor the music were in their hymn book, so they demonstrated their non-participation by just blankly staring at a screen. There are times when the music is meaningful and the words are directly out of the Scriptures, yet they do not like them, and then still others find them to be up-lifting and enriching.

While some people today would think that you can't do without all of the bells and whistles in order for worship to happen, I'm mindful of a man whose heart was very heavy (Isaiah 6). He went to the temple in the year that the king died and he "saw the Lord high and lifted up!" Whatever else is happening in our churches in preaching forms or presentation forms of video, drama, music or dress, if this simple, overwhelming experience is not taking place, then we have missed it! We need, "I saw the Lord!" Keep focused on HIM!

I am confident that as long as "Grads," "Dads," or "Fads" stay focused on moving toward the Lord, then we will end up in the right place at the right time!



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. *(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

First Church, Columbus, has three participants in the State Bible Drills. Pictured (from left) are Ashley McCall, Caitlyn McDade, and Garrett Hall.

The Children's 1st-6th grade Choir of **First Church, Coffeerville**, presented their spring musical, *Splash Kingdom*, on May 4. Denise Boxx, Donna Hill, and Eilizabeth Johnsey are leaders for the choir.

Poplar Springs Church, Newton, recently held its annual Walk-A-Thon for the Baptist Children's Village. They raised \$2,815.

Vardaman Church, DeKalb, recently had three state participants and one church participant in the Bible Drills held at Poplar Springs Church, Meridian.



Bible Drill Participants, First Church Columbus



Vardaman Church Bible Drill Participants, DeKalb

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Children's Choir of First Church Coffeerville



Poplar Springs Church Walk-A-Thon, Newton



Pictured from left are Margaret Armstrong, director of Volunteer Services; Beverly Gilbert, auxiliary president; Bobbie Ware, director of Baptist's Cancer Services; Jay Chanos, president of The TRUST; Jerry Cotton, executive vice president, Baptist Health Systems; Dot Terry, auxiliary past president; and Jean Greene, auxiliary liaison to The TRUST.

Volunteers Recognized for Cancer Center Fundraising Efforts

Baptist Health Systems recently held a dedication ceremony in the new Hederman Cancer Center, hosted by The TRUST, the Foundation for Baptist. The ceremony recognized the Baptist auxiliary's generous gift to fund the second floor lobby and the prayer room in the new cancer center. The auxiliary volunteers raised the \$110,000 through the sale of flowers and jewelry.

For more information on becoming a Baptist volunteer, call (601) 968-1210.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

June 5, 2003

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

Book-Link

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Men's Ministry Groups
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worship and communicate
the gospel through



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Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
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 - Talent show
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- Cost of \$160.50 per person includes: lodging, meals, insurance, music and T-shirt

For registration call:

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 228-452-7261

For program information:

Church Music Department, 1-800-748-1651,
ext. 274, 601-292-3274 or E-mail: sclark@mbcb.org

Lord, you are...

Gulfshore Music Leadership Conference

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
July 10-12, 2003
228-452-7261



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Plans and Pluses 2003	Barry Tweedy
Hymn Treasures	Rusty Miller
Behavior Management Through Incentives	Rusty Miller
Enlisting, Training, and Keeping Small Group Leaders	Rusty Miller
Leading the Multicultural Choir	Marlynn Martin
Interpretive Movement with Older Children	Marlynn Martin
Organizing a Resource Center	Marlynn Martin
Those Thrilling Threes	Lorrie Stringer
Working with the Special Needs Child	Lorrie Stringer
Pathway to Music Literacy (All Ages)	Lorrie Stringer

• For program information, contact the Church Music Department
at 601-292-3267 or 1-800-748-1651.

• For registration information, contact Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 228-452-7261

Mississippi CWJC Retreat



June 27-28

Friday 5:30 p.m. - noon Saturday

Camp Garaywa

**For CWJC Leadership,
Volunteers & Supporters**

Cost: \$48 per person

(includes 1 night lodging and 3 meals)

CWJC Retreat Registration Form

Name _____

E-mail _____

Address _____

Phone (day) _____

Phone (night) _____

CWJC Site _____

Please make check payable to MBCB
and memo CWJC Retreat. Mail to:

Mississippi WMU CWJ Retreat
PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

Missions Blitz 2003

Mississippi WMU

Perry Association

*One day Family Mission
opportunities June 28th*

Deadline is June 6 - call today!!!

Under the influence

Mississippi Baptist Youth Night

Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson • July 25, 2003 • 8:30-9:00 p.m.



Stuart Hall
Speaker



Jake Gullledge
Worship Leader

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July 24-26, 2003 • Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

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**For program information, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800 in Jackson.**



WOMEN'S ENRICHMENT TRAINING TRACK

When you make your reservations for Growing Churches, if you plan to attend the Women's Enrichment Training Track, please indicate this with the Gulfshore Baptist Assembly reservation. There's a **limit of 80 leaders** in this track. You may want to send at least one leader from your church to attend this special track. For more information, contact Kathy Burns, KBurns@mbcb.org.

Single Again Conference

For more information, contact Ronney Joe Webb, 601-649-5710

Saturday, June 21, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
9 p.m. - 1 a.m.



WIDOWS CONFERENCES

Widows by Sharon Barham, Laurel
Divorce by Wayne Hudson, VanCleave
Single Parenting by Dot Day, Hazelhurst
Singles/Never Married by Derrick Tennant

GA Father/Daughter Overnight

July 11-12
Camp Garaywa

Cost: \$33 per person
(includes meals, lodging, insurance and program fees)



Father/Daughter is a special time for fathers and their GA daughters (1st - 6th grades) to share the excitement of missions learning. This is an excellent opportunity for those who have never been to Camp Garaywa to learn more about the camp program and facilities. All overnights begin at 5 p.m. on Friday and end at 2 p.m. on Saturday.

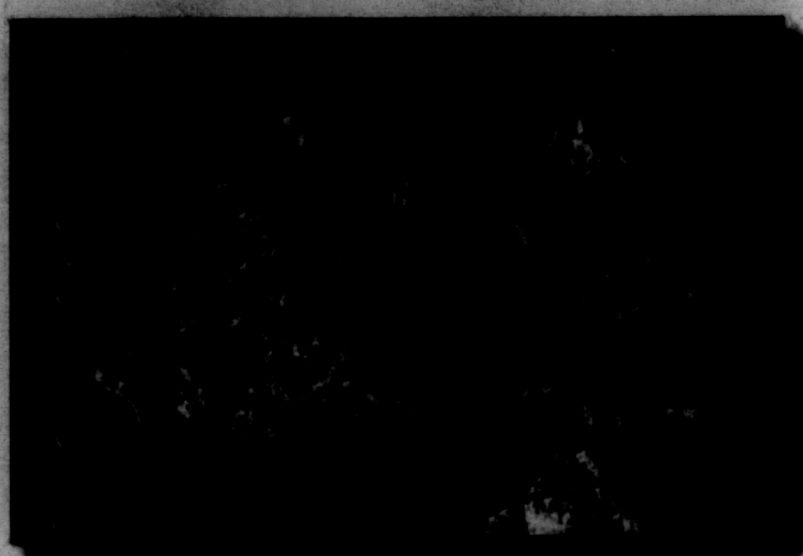
Fathers will be in one cabin and daughters will be in a separate cabin with a cabin leader. **The registration deadline is June 27.** If space is still available after the deadline date, reservations will be accepted at the cost of \$38 per person. No refunds after June 27.

GA Father/Daughter Overnight Registration Form

Parent's Name: _____
Daughter's Name: _____ Age: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone Number: _____ (daytime) _____ (evenings)
Church Name: _____ Association: _____
Emergency Contact Name: _____ Phone: _____
Number attending _____ x \$33 = \$ _____ (total enclosed)

PLEASE REMEMBER THESE WMU PROCEDURES

- Please mail in your registration with payment. • Reservations may not be made by phone. • Groups wishing to bunk together must register together.
- Whenever possible, please send one check for entire group.
- Make checks payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) and send to: WMU/Father/Daughter Overnight, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205



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Conference

July 24-26, 2003
Calhoun Baptist Assembly

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Church, Decatur, Ala.

National church library specialist
Church Library Program,
LifeWay Christian Resources
Nashville, Tenn.

Natchitoches, La.
Library director
First Baptist Church
Natchitoches, La.

performing
artists for
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CHURCHES
THROUGH
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Pray this day for...

June 6-19, 2003

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"You had better take time to pray until Jesus is glorified in your eyes: then you will be able to make Him glorious to others."

Aimee Semple McPherson

Members of Team Magdeburg, Germany, are working with a follow-up class from the ProChrist revival in the city of Gardelegen. This class has the potential of coming into the first "living" church in this city of 30,000. Pray for the maturing of this small group of believers.

Happy Father's Day - The idea of a day for children to honor their fathers began in Spokane, Wash. Sonora Smart-Dodd had the idea while listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909. In 1970 President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Pray that all fathers will seek to be the kind of fathers they should be.

For: (1) GA Camp, Camp Garaywa, Clinton, 9th - 13th (WMU); (2) Summer Missions Camp for Boys (Grades 4-12), Central Hills, Koochiko, 10 a.m. - 9th-1 p.m., 13th (MM); (3) Two people in Iraq have specifically asked for New Testaments. Pray also for the many other seekers in the country.

For: (1) GA Camp Camp Garaywa, Clinton, 16th - 20th (WMU); (2) Summer Missions Camp for Boys (Grades 4-12), Central Hills, Koochiko, 10 a.m., 16th - p.m., 20th (MM); (3) VI Youth Conference, Gulfshore, 16th - 20th (MBCB)

The Nigerian Baptist Convention already has 10 to 15 home personnel scattered throughout their country in an effort to reach the most unreached peoples of Nigeria. They also have a few foreign missionaries and hope to have more in the near future.

For: (1) Southern Baptist Convention, Phoenix, Ariz., 17th - 18th. Jack Graham is SBC president; (2) Harold Moore is the assistant coordinator for the Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief Unit. Pray that some of the volunteers will feel led to commit to being leaders in disaster relief work.

Brandon "Keith" Travis, LTC, is the senior chaplain at Ft. Bragg, N.C. and is a reservist, currently on active duty. Pray for Keith's family, his ministry at home, the soldiers they minister to, and for the opportunities to present the gospel to all soldiers.

For: (1) All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra Camp and Tour, Maryland/Delaware, 8th-28th (CM); (2) The Valencia Professional Team, Venezuela, requests prayer for the Christian medical professionals who are seeking God's direction in how to best reach out to their lost colleagues with the gospel.

For: (1) V Youth Conference, Gulfshore, 12th - 16th (MBCB); (2) In Inhambane Province, Mozambique, there are two existing Baptist churches affiliated with the Mozambique Baptist Convention. Pray that God would use the members of those churches to evangelize and disciple other people.

Almost half of the suicides worldwide take place in China, where only one-fifth of the world's people live. The majority occur among its women, who have a 25 percent higher suicide rate than that of Chinese men. Pray that the thousands who are hurting to that degree will hear about the love of Jesus.

For: (1) Living Proof Seminar, BancorpSouth Center, Tupelo, 7-9:30 p.m., 6th - 8:30 a.m.-noon, 7th (Lifeway & WMU); (2) Promise Keepers Conference, Jackson, 6th & 7th; (3) Please pray today for Prime Minister Pierre Charles of Dominica (eastern Caribbean Sea).

For: (1) International Family Fun Fest, Aiken Village, Starkville, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (D&FM); (2) IV Youth Conference, Gulfshore, 7th - 11th (MBCB); (3) Pray today for President Abel Pacheco of Costa Rica (Central America).

For: (1) Mother/Son Weekend, Central Hills (MM); (2) A former Sikh priest in India found many similarities in the Bible and the Grahth Srim (Sikh scriptures), except that the Bible teaches Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. Pray that other Sikh religious leaders will also find salvation in Jesus Christ.

For: (1) WMU, SBC Annual Meeting, Phoenix, Ariz., 14th - 16th (WMU); (2) Jack Shelby is the director of the Baptist Men's Ministries and Volunteers in Missions with the Illinois Convention. Pray for Royal Ambassador camps in June and July, and for Jack as he looks toward retirement in 2004.



Pastor and Wife Retreat

August 7 (2 p.m.) - August 9 (1 p.m.) Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

Dr. and Mrs. P.J. Scott
Pastor and wife
FBC, Olive Branch

Lew King
Minister of Music
FBC, Byram

- **Supervised child care** will be made available for preschoolers, children and youth.
- **Participation is limited** to the first hundred (100) couples who register for this retreat. This number is based on the available private accommodations at Gulfshore.
- **Registration** must be made with Gulfshore using the form included or the 2003 Gulfshore Baptist Assembly Information Brochure.

Cost: 2 nights lodging and 6 meals:

- **Adults:** \$95 per person
 - **Ages 12 & up:** \$55 per person
 - **Ages 2-11:** \$32.50 per person
 - **Age 2 and under:** no cost
- There is no conference fee.

Scholarships: Scholarships of \$50 per pastor are available.

For more info, contact MBCB Pastor/Leadership Development
1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3305.

HOUSE TOPS

COLLEGE & SEMINARY NEWS

Seven students will be named **William Carey College (WCC) Scholars** and honored at an awards dinner on June 12 at 7 p.m. in the Lucile Parker Gallery, Hattiesburg campus. WCC Scholars receive a scholarship to cover full tuition for four years at Carey. The Scholars are Megan Harvey, Ocean Springs; Lacey Hobbs, Brandon; Christopher

Eminent Scholars Grant Program, and other talent-based and merit-based scholarships by calling (601) 318-6103.

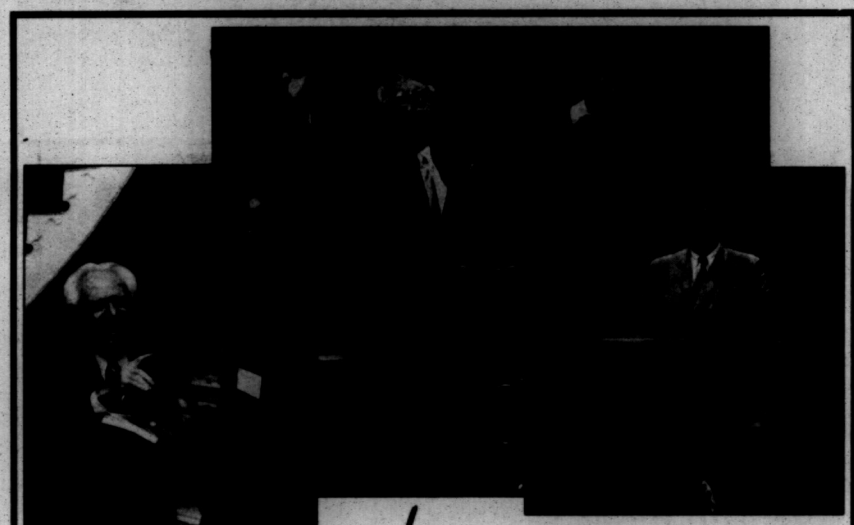
William and Kathryn Clawson, Hattiesburg, recently established a \$10,000 endowed scholarship at William Carey College (WCC). The William Clawson Endowed Scholarship



Kennedy, president of WCC and Kathryn & William Clawson

Knight, Petal; Chancellor Massey, Sandhill; Matthew McHan, Stringer; Jesse Smith, Seminary; and Rachel Whitehead, Sumrall. Students who will be first-time freshmen can obtain applications for the WCC Scholars grant, Mississippi

will benefit needy students wishing to major in ministry at Carey. Pictured (from left) Larry Kennedy, WCC president, accepts a check from Kathryn and William Clawson.



THE Stephen Olford Center

FOR BIBLICAL PREACHING

The Center was founded in 1988 to promote the biblical exposition of God's Word and to provide practical training for pastors, evangelists and lay leaders throughout the world. Drs. Stephen and David Olford share an abiding passion for encouraging and equipping men and women to rightly divide the Word of Truth and to live Spirit-filled lives. The ultimate answer to problems of every age is the anointed expository preaching of God's inerrant and holy Word.

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Email: info@stephenolford.org

STATE CHANGES



Beaver

Rest Church, Crystal Springs.

Laurel Hill Church, Carthage, called **Hugh A. Martin** as interim pastor on January 12 and he accepted the call as pastor in April. Martin and his wife reside in Philadelphia.

Midway Church, Jackson, called **Charles Gentry** as pastor on June 1.

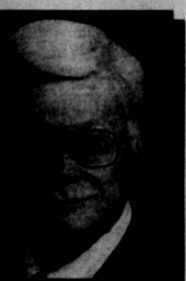
Gentry comes from Farmhaven Church, Madison.



McLain

McLain is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry degree at Luther Rice Seminary, Lithonia, Ga.

Calvary Church, Pascagoula, has called **Johnny Beaver** as pastor effective June 1. Beaver comes from Pilgrim's



Gentry

Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, recently called **Grant McLain** as pastor. McLain is currently working on

HOMEcomings & REVIVALS

West Kemper, Moscow: June 25-29; Wed.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m., a potluck lunch will follow; Jimmy Williams, Fellowship, Meridian, evangelist; Reggie Lovorn, singing; 2nd Mile, music; Tommy Jones, supply preacher.

Fairview, Sumrall: June 8-12; Sunday, 10:30 a.m., lunch at noon, afternoon singing; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Charles Loftin, Calvary, Bassfield, speaking; Heaven's Grace, music; Walter Harrell, pastor.

Union, Brookhaven: June 8; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will be served at noon; afternoon singing, 1:30 p.m.; Greg Johnston, speaking; Joe Cook Family, music; John Fisk, pastor.

Parkhill, Jackson: June 8; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will follow; Charles Ramsey, speaking; Jimmy Bailey, music.

Philadelphia, Caseyville: June 8; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m.; lunch will follow; bring a covered dish; Talmage Smith, speaking.

Visit us on the web at:

www.mbecb.org



Evangelist Charles Smith and his family have relocated their home and ministry base to the gentle, rolling hills of Oktibbeha County.

Charles Smith Ministries
2466 Oglesby Road
Sturgis, MS 39769

To reach Charles by phone, you may call the offices of Meadowview Church, Starkville, during normal business hours at 662-323-2963; or his cell number at 662-514-1131.

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Vancouver is next Strategic Focus City

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — An international city known as a North American gateway for Asian immigrants, Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada, has been chosen as the next site for the North American Mission Board's Strategic Focus City (SFC) outreach effort.

Southern Baptists will work in partnership with the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists and churches of the Capilano Association to provide hundreds of volunteers and other resources for a variety of church planting, evangelism and other ministry projects. Preparation for the effort will begin this year, with the primary implementation phase set for 2006.

"We're very excited about the choice of Vancouver as a Strategic Focus City," said Gerry Taillon, national ministry team leader for the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists. "We feel like it's a wonderful opportunity to work in a world-class city like Vancouver. It's a great opportunity for the churches in Vancouver to really sense God's direction and guidance, and get together to see what they can do to impact the Kingdom of God."

Noting the area is about 25% Asian, he called the effort "a wonderful opportunity to not only impact Vancouver and the surrounding areas, but to impact the world."

Vancouver will be the ninth major city in North America to be impacted by Strategic Focus Cities, which began in 2000 with efforts in Chicago and Phoenix. Other SFC efforts have touched Boston, Las Vegas, Seattle, and Philadelphia, and this is the first year of implementation for the Miami effort. Next year a two-year implementation period will begin for New York City.

As of the end of 2002, more than 37,000 individuals had made first-time commitments to Christ through SFC initiatives, and 255 new churches were started to help new believers grow in their faith and reach others. A total of 28,947 volunteers from across the country were mobilized for a variety of outreach efforts.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

The RA Lads of West Heights Church, Pontotoc, recently participated in a Lineglider Race. Pictured (from left, seated) are Cameron Timmons, Brayden Timmons, Nathan Tidwell, Randy Morgan, (standing) Dusty Foster, Dustin Jensen, Justin Jensen, and Chet Crawford. Gary Morgan is the group leader.

The children of Clifton Church, Forest, recently participated in church, associational, and state Bible Drills. Pictured (from left, front) are Colton Bell, Dustin Cushman, Ashli Bell, Breanne Harrison, Michael Ann Durham, Amber Bell, Brittany Chapman, (back) Kristi Bell, Megan Ash, Brittany Cushman, Nicole Harrell, Elizabeth Ash, and Tabatha Ash.

The GAs of West Laurel Church, Laurel, recently finished the year learning about missions and the value of giving their time to others.

The Jaybird Saints of Grays Creek Church, Hernando, attended the Passion Play at Bellevue Church, Memphis, Tenn., on April 12. The Jaybird Saints ministry is to provide outreach, prayer support, and education for senior adults in the church and community.

Leaf River Church, Louin, will hold VBS on June 9-13 from 6-8:30 p.m. The commencement will be held June 13 at 7:30 p.m. with a fellowship afterwards. For more information, call (601) 789-5106.

Bethel Church, Drew, will have Promised, Coila, in concert on June 14 at 7 p.m. Larry Choucolli is pastor.

Hickory Grove Church, Sumrall, will hold VBS on June 9-13 from 6-8:30 p.m. Parent's Night will be held June 13 at 7 p.m. For more information, call (601) 758-4448.



RA Lads of West Heights Church, Pontotoc

Bethesda Church, Terry, will present Sweet Land of Liberty, a musical with the Bethesda Church Choir and neighboring churches, on June 28 and 29 at 7 p.m.

New Salem Church, Columbus, will hold VBS on June 23-27 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. For more information, call (662) 356-4940.



Bible Drill Participants of Clifton Church, Forest



Jaybird Saints of Grays Creek Church, Hernando

CLASSIFIED ADS

Advertise your word, minimum of 10 words; maximum of 50 words. Cash with order. Send ad to: Classified Ads, P.O. Box 100, Hernando, MS 38845. Phone number in ad is for contact only. Classified Ads accepted.

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ERIC PERKINS, MINISTER TO students at Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., has been accepted by the International Mission Board to serve as a church planter in Uruguay. The church is

receiving recommendations for the position of minister to students. Send recommendations to: Harrisburg Baptist Church, attn: Dr. Forrest Sheffield, 4675 Cliff Cookin Blvd., Tupelo, MS 38801.

BETHESDA BAPTIST CHURCH, TERRY, Miss., is currently seeking a pianist to play in all services and rehearsals. For more information, please call (601) 939-1836 or fax inquires to (601) 939-2924.

FRANKLIN BAPTIST CHURCH, FLORA, Miss. is seeking a bivocational youth minister and a music minister. Send resume with photo to: search committee, attn: Jo Willett, 2066 Cox Ferry Road, Flora, MS 39071.

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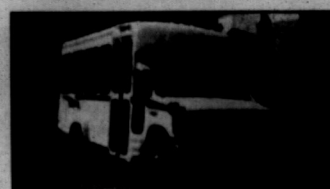
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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The Church: Growing Disciples

Luke 9:23-24; Ephesians 4:29-5:10

By Karen Hollowell

Deny yourself! Put others' interests first. Speak only if you have something helpful to say. These don't sound like mottoes for people of the 21st century who are often caught up in careers where "every man for himself" is the creed for success. Often in families and even in our churches we will defend the unwholesome speech that Paul warns us about in Ephesians by a comment like, "I believe in telling it like it is", or "they shouldn't have asked if they didn't want the truth". Thinking of others before ourselves is contrary to today's worldly standards that emphasize "taking care of number one." However, this worldview is in complete opposition to Christ's teachings found in

the Bible.

In this week's lesson, we see that another main purpose of the church is to help people grow as disciples of Christ. To do that, we must first be an example of a mature disciple.

In Luke 9, Jesus tells His disciples the earthly future that is awaiting Him (v. 22).

In verses 23 and 24, Jesus then tells them something more astounding: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it." We often think that the everyday troubles we have in life are "crosses." Jesus was speaking of something deeper here. Persecution for our faith is a



Hollowell

cross. The dying of self to sin daily is another cross. Obedience is the key to bearing Christ's cross. He was "obedient unto death." Are we willing to do the same? In Ephesians 5:1, Paul writes "Be imitators of God." This is not an option for us. This is the only way new believers in our churches and communities will grow as disciples. In Ephes. 4:29 through 5:10, Paul tells us what imitating God is and what it isn't. The original Greek for imitator or follower is "mimetai," where we derive our English word for mimic. Would you want a new believer to watch you in church or through your daily life during the week and then mimic you? Would that new believer hear you speak "only what is helpful for building others up" and see you resist rage and bitterness and instead respond with compassion and forgiveness? (v.29-33) Would you be seen reading your Bible, pray-

ing, witnessing, and worshipping in "spirit and in truth"? Or would you be seen as two different people—a Christian on Sunday, and a child of the world the rest of the week? To effectively grow disciples, churches, corporately and as individuals, must live lives in which Christ alone is Lord. Anyone can make this claim verbally, but our actions are what will confirm it. Are we living everyday to show that Christ is our sole authority?

Paul reminds us that we are God's people and therefore holy. He further admonishes us that we must live as "children of light" and not of darkness. As such, we are not to be like the world, no matter how much the world may condone it. Would that new believer I wrote about earlier be able to distinguish between you as a self-proclaimed Christian and a non-believer? Holiness demands that we not be immoral, impure, or greedy. These actions show us to be disobedient which grieves the

Holy Spirit. This means that we break God's heart when we sin. To think that the God of the universe, the Creator, is hurt when any of His children choose to live contrary to His commands—what a sobering thought!

A major part of denying ourselves is to lay aside our interests and pursue only what Christ has for us. There are many things that we enjoy as part of our temporal existence. Are we willing to give them up at any time? No amount of earthly success can compare to the joy of being obedient to the Lord. This is the message young disciples in the church need to see mature believers live. The church, as God's community of grace, needs to take a strong stand about upholding Christ's standards as the only standard by which to live. His standards will enable us to imitate God in our lives. Isn't that the true meaning of discipleship?

Hollowell is member of Crosby Church, Crosby.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Be True to the Gospel

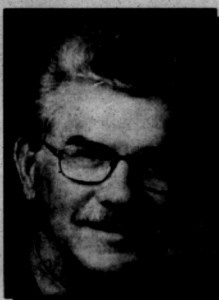
Galatians 2:1-21

By Kiely Young

"This will be the land of the free, as long as it is the home of the brave." Thus said Elmer Davis in But We Were Born Free. The apostle Paul would wholeheartedly agree. For indeed, he not only stood strong in and on his spiritual liberty in Christ, he was willing to fight for that liberty. This incident finds Paul standing before the Jerusalem in Acts 15:10-11: "Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." We too must understand the essentials of salvation by grace through

faith in Jesus Christ as the only means of salvation.

I. Set a Good Example (vv. 4-5, 11-13). Paul stood his ground before his heretical accusers who insisted that Titus, being a Greek, must be circumcised to give true evidence of his salvation. The simple truth remains, all must come to salvation in the same way, through faith in Jesus Christ alone upon the confession and repentance of our sins. Paul would not, nor should we, yield to religious pressure to do or believe any different. Even baptism, though it is a sign of obedience for a new believer, is not necessary for salvation. We must remember that non-believers want the truth, the whole truth and nothing but



Young

the truth, nothing added, nothing taken away. We can't let anyone or anything keep us from living by the truth of the Gospel.

II. Be Consistent (vv. 14-16). Paul charged Peter with being a "hypocrite" and "not being straightforward with the Gospel." Paul states again as if to say "Hello, are you listening?" verse 16: "A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ." There is absolutely nothing that we can do to be any more free from sin but to accept the sacrificial atoning death of Christ for our sins, and His resurrection from the dead by the power of our Heavenly Father.

Paul is answering not only those Jewish religious leaders demanding circumcision as evidence of salvation, but the leading disciples of Jerusalem. He is stating clearly ALL the work of salvation, our "justification," making us "clean before our

Father, just as if we had not sinned" was done entirely by Christ. There is not one thing we can add.

III. Live for God (vv. 17-21). A young mother asked her children as they were participating in a family worship experience, "Is there anything we can do that will stop God from loving us?" They, having been taught of the depth of God's love, said "No, God might not like some of the things we do, but He would never stop loving us." How true, and thus we believe and must communicate this deep but simple truth. God did all the work of salvation in Christ. Now we must follow in like step with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Faith in Christ gives us liberty to live, not license, nor bondage. We do not have to keep a set of rules added to

salvation by someone's interpretation of the Gospel. We choose to live by the truth of God's Word as a guide for our life. We choose to live by the Beatitudes given by Christ in His Sermon on the Mount as a guide in loving those we associate with daily. We choose to submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit for daily empowerment and wisdom. We choose to follow God's pattern, plan and will for our lives. These choices give us victory over our past through Christ's forgiveness of our sins, strength for the present through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and hope for the future through unlimited love of our Heavenly Father. That's why Paul says, "the life I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." We don't deserve that love, but we can be true to that love.

Young is the director of the Sunday School Dept. of the MBCB in Jackson.

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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where, and how of the story along with a con-

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THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES



THE RIGHT TO COMPLAIN

By: Jimmy Porter



Porter

The preacher's sermon title was "Earning the Right to Complain." Previous thinking had led me to believe that complaining was a guaranteed right given to all Baptists at the time of their baptismal service.

Never once did I ever believe you had to earn this privilege; that is, until I heard the pastor's sermon.

The opening minutes of the sermon were dedicated to defining and describing complainers. His thesis was that if you were going to complain then you must at least put forth some time, money, energy, and thought into the problem at hand. Before the sermon had ended, each of us realized that we were all guilty and without excuse.

The point of that sermon is as relevant today as it was then, especially in this election year. We are quick to fuss about our elected officials and their proposals but slow to fix, or at least attempt to fix, anything. The prescribed method of changing the political landscape is to get involved in the political process. Too often Christianity and churches refrain from involvement due to a misunderstanding of federal restrictions.

The Bible states, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God" (Romans 13:1, RSV). God has ordained government to serve his purpose. Therefore, God is concerned about government and our involvement in it. Our Lord told his followers to "... give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Luke 20:25, NIV).

As a Christian I have been mandated to be the "salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." Can I fulfill this commandment if I totally neglect my political responsibilities? Personally, I don't think so. Therefore, every

Christian should be registered to vote and should vote in every election. Every Christian should be knowledgeable of the

issues and should communicate his/her views to their legislators. Also, there is a need for Christians to get involved in political parties and to work in elections if possible. Your influence in these areas could be invaluable in helping formulate political platforms.

Often the question is asked, "What can my church do without breaking any laws?" Richard Hammer in Church Clergy Tax Guide, 2003 Edition, p. 458,

reference is made to their candidacy.

As private citizens, pastors and other staff members may engage in unlimited political activity as long as it is defined as individual action and not that of the church. Pastors and staff must use their own personal funds and not those of the church for any political activities. Pastors and staff members are not

denied the right to voice their opinions or to participate in political activity, even campaigning for a candidate, as long as it is not within the context of their employment. Yes, pastors can preach sermons on the issues at hand and encourage others to vote. He cannot publicly tell you what candidate you should support.

There are several illegal activities that can seriously jeopardize a church's non-profit status. Churches are not allowed to contribute to anyone's political campaign fund. It is unlawful to use official church publications such as bulletins, newsletters, etc. to make public statements about the position of candidates.

The church cannot distribute voter guides that contain questions designed to demonstrate a bias on particular issues.

The church is to be non-partisan so it is prohibited from endorsing a particular candidate. Bake sales, singings, raffles, and all such activities can be fundrais-

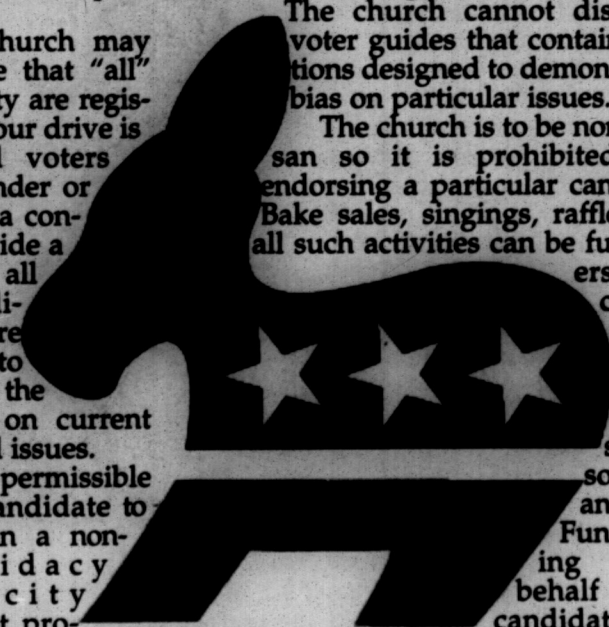
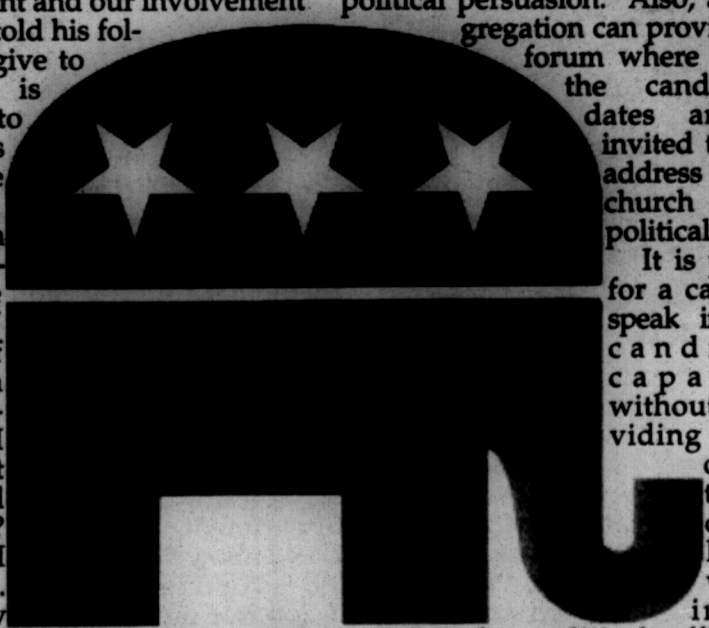
ers for a candidate, but the church cannot sponsor such an event. Fund raising on behalf of a candidate is definitely forbidden. And, of course, churches cannot purchase newspapers or TV ads encouraging voters to vote for a particular individual.

The lines are clear as to what is and is not acceptable. Too often we allow a few "can't do's" to keep us from doing anything. The Christian Action Commission hopes that this year all Mississippi Baptist eligible voters will

get involved in the election of those running for political office.

When I hear the complaints hurled at our state and our elected officials, I wonder "Has that person earned the right to say that?" We have for years seen the moral climate of our nation move farther and farther away from good and godly principles. It does no good to try and place the blame on others when we continue to be apathetic on election day.

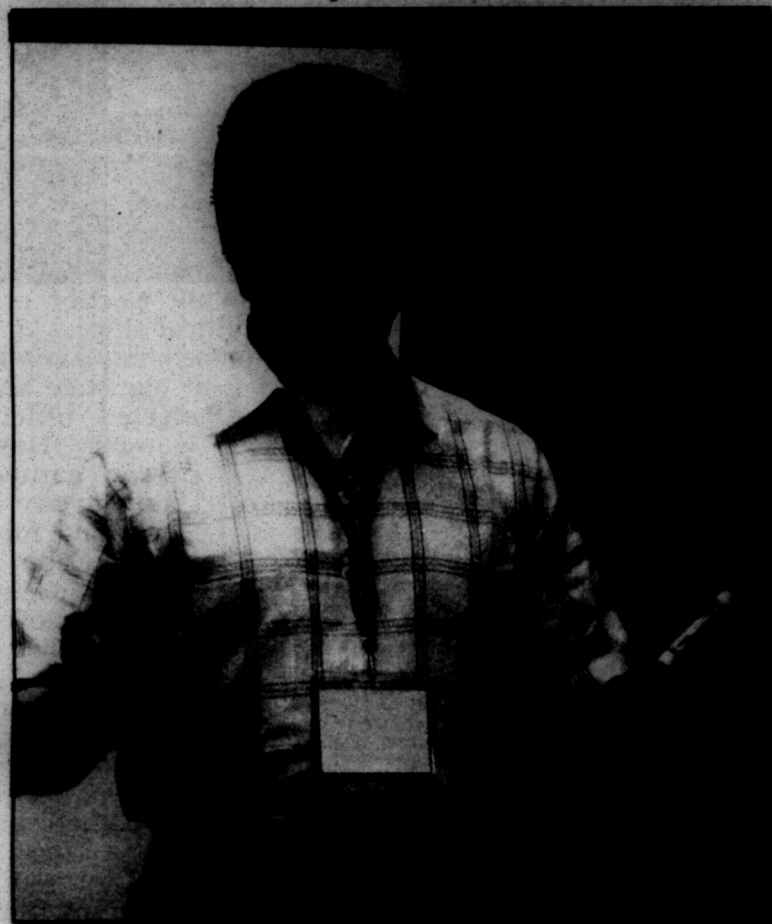
Memorial Day reminded me once again that my freedoms were not bought with silver and gold but with suffering, sacrifice, and death. For me, caring about what happens in Mississippi is not only my moral duty but also my Christian responsibility. Dr. Richard D. Land, President of The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, states, "Citizen Christians are called upon not just to enjoy, but experience, not just to preach, but to practice their liberties. Surely, there could be no better thing for Americans and for America than for Citizen Christians to awaken to the exercise of their rights and to the fulfillment of their responsibilities." It's just like my pastor said, "Go earn the right to complain."



If you are interested in receiving Christian Action Commission updates via the internet and will share this information with friends and your church, please e-mail us at rwwood@mbcb.org. Include your name, address, phone number, and church name.

Laity called to fulfill church planting role

CHICAGO (BP) — An army of laypeople willing to help start new churches is essential for the task of reaching North America, but the trickier issue is that many would-be church planters still think it takes a call to vocational ministry to start a church. The



Kicklighter

"Laypeople don't hear church planting as if we're talking to them," he said during a workshop as part of NAMB's May 18-21 Connection 2003 conference. "So the question becomes, how do we create a climate that makes it natural for laypeople to understand that church planting is all about them?"

The workshop allowed missionaries, pastors, and other leaders who gathered in Chicago to work through ideas for tackling those issues as well as how to identify, enlist, train and equip laypeople God has called.

One of the key issues, Kicklighter said, is that there are many church planting situations in which the only viable way of starting a work is if somebody who lives and works in the focus community leads the work. "There are pockets of people that existing churches are not reaching, for whatever reason, and the Gospel is not being intentionally proclaimed," he said.

One critical way of getting church members to see the need is prayer, Kicklighter said, urging churches to more spend time intentionally praying for the lost in their own community as well as elsewhere. "If they start talking to the Father about the issue of lostness, if they're spiritually alive at all, they'll have to respond as the Father leads them to deal with that lostness," he said.

He also suggested that churches spend more time recognizing individuals who have become involved in church planting as well as other ministry efforts.

"Most every church has one of those who is called, and they know that God's got more for them, but they don't know what it is," he said. "Nobody has really turned them loose to do it."

Another approach could be simply to elevate the work of God in the lives of believers having separate public invitations for believers responding to God's call on their lives — an approach Kicklighter said once was a regular part of many church worship services.

"What would it look like in our churches if, on some regular basis, that in addition to inviting people to accept Christ as Savior we began inviting people to be involved in Kingdom work?" he asked.

On the denominational level, churches should be recognized more for the number of churches they've started, or the number of members they've sent out to work with a new church start.

Kicklighter described a number of resources developed by NAMB and others to assist in raising awareness, enlisting and training lay church planters:

- **Calling Out the Called**, originally developed in Chicago, is a process for helping laypeople pray through, define and live out their call to local missions — culminating in a service in which they are given the opportunity to respond. The process typically involves clusters of churches working together to start another church with core group members from the participating churches.

- **Discovery Tools** helps individuals determine if God is calling them to church planting. Included are a spiritual gifts inventory and other assessment tools. The process often takes the form of a one-day workshop, and it is also available online at churchplantingvillage.net/equip. Those who complete the process and feel called to church planting are eligible to receive additional free resources from NAMB.

- A reprint of several profiles of lay church planters previously published in *On Mission* could help church members realize the possibilities for involvement.

- **Laypeople in Church Planting** is a new resource being developed by NAMB describing a comprehensive strategy for encouraging and supporting lay church planting with a church, association, or state convention.

The Chicago conference was the first of three scheduled for this year. Connection 2003 Conferences also are planned in Atlanta for July 30-Aug. 2, and at the LifeWay Conference Center in Glorietta, N.M., on Sept. 24-27. More information is available at www.namb.net/connection.

Church planting in Mississippi is supported by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering. For information, contact Ed Deuschle, Director of Church Planting, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3224, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 224. E-mail: edeuschle@mbcb.org.

perception often is that "church planting is all about some guy we pay to do it, some seminary person," said Van Kicklighter, a lay church planting specialist for the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

Ross: new teen sex report should awaken parents

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A recent report showing that nearly one in five young teenagers has had sex highlights the need for increased parental involvement in their children's lives, an expert who helped found the True Love Waits abstinence campaign said.

The report by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy found 18-19% of teens age 14 or younger have had sex but only 30% of their parents believe so.

Richard Ross, a spokesperson for the True Love Waits abstinence campaign, said the report underscores the need for parental involvement in teens' lives. Ross is professor of student ministry at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

"Far too many parents are hoping their words and perhaps their example will be enough to positively shape the sexual behavior of their kids," Ross said. "They hope this even while they neglect any kind of relationship with those middle-schoolers. Career advancement, adult social lives, failing marriages, and a host of other preoccupations leave the kids stone cold empty inside."

Often, those teens will "ignore the instruction" of their parents and try to fill an emotional void with sex, Ross said.

The report had other troubling findings. About half of 14-year-olds and a third of 12-year-olds said they had been at a party without adult supervision. Also, about a quarter of young teens who date say they have dated someone who is at least two years older. Such relationships, the report says, are much more likely to involve sex.



Ross

The report gave a list of recommendations, including increased parent-teen discussion on sex. "I can applaud that as a positive step," Ross said. "...Conversations will never have much power until parents reorder their priorities and begin to rebuild heart connections with their own children. Students then will begin to live chaste lives — not to age 14 — but to the marriage altar."

The report, which is based on data primarily collected in the last 10 years, is available in a seven-chapter report titled "14 and Younger: The Sexual Behavior of Young Adolescents." Specifically, the study found:

- About 18-19% of 14-year-olds have had sex. The number is 10% for 13-year-olds and four to five percent for 12-year-olds.

- Boys age 14 and younger are "slightly" more likely to have had sex than girls the same age.

- Sexually active teens are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke, and use illegal drugs. Forty-three percent of sexually active teens say they have smoked marijuana, compared to only 10% of virgins.

- About half of young teens say they have been on a date in the past 18 months.

- Thirty-three percent of young teens who date someone who is three or more years older say the relationship includes sex. When the difference in dating age is two years, the percentage is 26%. If the teens are the same age, the number drops to 13%.

- Parents and teens disagree on whether they had had a conversation about sex.

- Approximately one in seven sexually active 14-year-olds reports being pregnant.

For more information on True Love Waits in Mississippi, contact Harvey Ellis, Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3286, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 286. E-mail: hgelis@mbcb.org.

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STL MX LBTNTZINT

ZTDN, STXL, D FNIEVXT

GTVCA STZL MX IZ

TCLTNVCA VCLI BVX

NTXL, DCJ IZ JIM

XBIMSO XTTE LI KIET

XBINL IZ VL.

BTGNTUX ZIMN: ICT

Clue: E = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Revelation 3:16